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Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The New York "World" would have Congress punish Carnegie by cutting down the tariff on iron and steel at least one-half. The "Sun" rightly condemns such a measure as ruinous to the operatives in the iron and steel industry, comparing it to "the Oriental method of punishing a man against whom you have a grudge by committing suicide on his doorstep." But the "Sun" fails to point out that Congress might deal Carnegie as severe a blow and at the same time confer a great blessing on the operatives by abolishing the tax on private banks which prevents business men from competing with Carnegie in the purchase of labor and the sale of steel. Yet the "Sun" knows this to be a fact. It could not say so, however, without endangering the standing of its editor as a member of the brotherhood of thieves.

The editor of the New York "Sun" drew an interesting parallel the other day between Andrew Carnegie and a hypothetical farmer. This farmer was supposed to have ten farm laborers in his employ, who, objecting to a reduction of their wages, resisted such reduction by arming themselves and taking forcible possession of the farm and buildings. The duty of the farmer under these circumstances, the "Sun" explained, "would be to call upon the authorities of the State to put him in possession of his own; and the State ought to do it, if it required every constable, sheriff, and regiment." There is not the smallest doubt that the "Sun" selected the case of a farmer for this parallel because the employing farmer is nearly always a hard-working manual laborer himself; the "Sun's" chief anxiety just now being to delude its readers with the idea that, in standing up for Carnegie, it is standing up for principle and the right of property, and that it would stand up as stiffly for principle and the right of property if the property in question were that of a manual laborer. Now, a day or two after the appearance of this article General Snowden's troops marched through Pennsylvania. They spent one night at Radebaugh, where lives a farmer named John Smith. During the night they trampled down John Smith's wheat and rye fields, robbed his potato patch, his onion bed, his hen-coop, and his pig-pen, and tore down his fences to use for fire-wood in roasting the product of his farm. The next day I searched the columns of the "Sun" to find its demand on Governor Pattison to call out somebody (not the troops, for they were already out and were themselves the offenders) to protect John Smith's property from ravage by the State soldiery. I found no such demand. Instead I found a humorous account of the affair occupying nearly a column, written in a style which indicated that the editor of the "Sun" regarded this wanton assault on Farmer John Smith's property as one of the best jokes ever perpetrated. He seemed especially delighted with the fact that, when John Smith sought redress, one of the regimental surgeons had been introduced to him as the General and had gravely assured him that the State would pay the bill. Evidently, in professing anxiety a day or two before about the property of the farmers, the editor of the "Sun" had been giving the laborers "guff." He is not interested in the property of laborers. He cares nothing for any form of honest labor. The only labor that he wants protected is that of the capitalists and editors who spend all their efforts in devising and defending means whereby to rob the people. The editor of the "Sun" belongs to the brotherhood of thieves.

When, shortly after the "Twentieth Century" changed hands, I predicted that it would become an organ of State Socialism, some of my friends thought my prophecy a baseless one. I wonder if they have read the "Twentieth Century" of July 14, containing an editorial declaration of adhesion to the People's Party and its platform. The paper which has always avoided and denounced politics and political methods now goes into politics and adopts political methods; the paper which has always opposed majority-rule proposes to decide the most momentous questions by majority-rule; the paper which has always declared compulsory taxation to be robbery now demands a graduated income tax; the paper which has always favored private ownership and enterprise now calls for government ownership of railways; the paper which has always insisted that land belongs to its occupant and user now declares that land is the property of all the people; the paper which has always maintained that the issue of money should be left to free competition now denies the right of anyone but the government to issue money; in short, the paper which has always seen the only hope of progress in the diminution and elimination of government now desires that "the powers of the government should be extended to the end that oppression, injustice, and poverty shall eventually cease in the land." Was I right or wrong, my friends? Has or has not the "Twentieth Century" become an organ of State Socialism? In one respect, however, I must admit my error. I had thought that the opposing force to this retrogressive movement would be found in J. W. Sullivan, Mr. Pentecost's old associate editor. But it turns out that he is the active force in it, the publishers, on the contrary, giving every evidence of pursuing a broad and liberal policy. Of the publishers there is no reason to complain; one can at most regret. Having bought the paper, it is proper that they should conduct it in harmony with their views of social problems. But what is the price at which Mr. Sullivan has been induced to burn what he once worshipped and worship what he once burned? This,—the insertion in the People's Party platform of a recommendation to the people and the press to favorably consider Mr. Sullivan's two-cent nostrum, the Referendum. It's a paltry mess of pottage for which to sell a birthright. Such ease in the turning of one's coat is the policy which Mr. Sullivan tries to dignify under the name of Opportunism. I think I could describe it more plainly, if less politely, in simpler language. These euphemisms ill become a man who has chided Proudhon for using misleading terms.

A Complete File of Liberty For Sale.

Readers of Liberty desirous of possessing the early volumes, now so rare, should remember that bids for them must reach me not later than August 13. The highest bidder will be given his choice of the following three sets, the second bidder to have second choice and the third bidder to take the remaining set:

1. A complete file of the first eight volumes of Liberty, unbound.
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The Bandit.

Dedicated to Andrew Carnegie.

The bandit on his prancing steed
Is fine for men to see;
His gay attire and striking deed
Both rivet you and me.

He passes, and we go our way;
The murdered in the mud
Are coarse and common; every day
We look upon their blood.

The bandit lets us share his spoil,
A pleasant fellow he;
The plundered with their loud turmoil
Clamor like waves at sea.

And the dead men, labor-worn and old,
Are ugly in our road;
We will not think the hands we hold
Are red with human blood.

So to the bandit on his steed,
Three cheers and three times three!
The dead and wounded call indeed,
But drink, and let them be.

Miriam Daniell.

Liberty.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — Proudhon.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

The Lesson of Homestead.

Regarding methods, one of the truths that has been most steadily inculcated by this journal has been that social questions cannot be settled by force. Recent events have only confirmed this view. But when force comes, it sometimes leads incidentally to the teaching of other lessons than that of its own uselessness and becomes thereby to that extent useful. The appeal to force at Homestead affords a signal example of such incidental beneficence, for it has forced the capitalistic papers of the country, and notably the New York "Sun," to take up a bold defence of liberty in order to protect property. Now, all that Anarchism asks is liberty, whether it protects property or not; and when the enemies of liberty can find no way of saving their own interests except by an appeal to liberty, Liberty means to make a note of it and hold them to it.

Listen, therefore, to the New York "Sun" preaching the gospel of liberty. The passages here quoted are fair samples of its editorial columns for the last fortnight.

> If a man has labor to sell, he must find some one with money to buy it, or it is of no more use to him than unused capital is to Mr. Carnegie. If the man does not like the price offered, he can reject it. If the buyer does not like the price asked, he has the same liberty. Neither is obliged to accept the bargain, though both are under the same law which forces men to take what they can get. If the laborer does not want the work longer than he contracted to give it, he can throw it up, and the employer has the same right to dispense with the laborer. The workman can choose his employer, and the employer can choose his workman. No law can take away that right from either. The workman can refuse to work and the employer to hire. Such is liberty.
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> There are a good many fools and there are not a few scoundrels in the United States: but, even if the scoundrels could persuade the fools that violence is a friend of the workmen, the great majority of the American people, heartily despising the scoundrels and pitying the fools, would stand up . . . for the right of every citizen to enjoy his own property and select his own employees, for the right of every citizen to work for whom he chooses, and to belong or not to belong to a labor organization, as he chooses. By whatever folly or violence these rights are attacked, they are invincible while the present idea of civilization lasts.

True, every word! Golden truth! Anarchistic truth! But the bearing of this truth, as Cap'n Cuttle would say, lies in the application of it. Applied to the conduct of the Homestead strikers, this principle of equal liberty, of which the "Sun's" words are an expression, instead of condemning it as the "Sun" pretends, palliates and even excuses it; for, before these strikers violated the equal liberty of others, their own right to equality of liberty had been wantonly and continuously violated. But, applied to the conduct of capitalists generally, it condemns it utterly, for the original violation of liberty in this matter is traceable directly to them.

This is no wild assertion, but a sober statement of fact, as I will explain. It is not enough, however true, to say that, "if a man has labor to sell, he must find some one with money to buy it"; it is necessary to add the much more important truth that, if a man has labor to sell, he has a right to a free market in which to sell it, a market in which no one shall be prevented by restrictive laws from honestly obtaining the money to buy it. If the man with labor to sell has not this free market, then his liberty is violated and his property virtually taken from him. Now, such a market has constantly been denied, not only to the laborers at Homestead, but to the laborers of the entire civilized world. And the men who have denied it are the Andrew Carnegies. Capitalists of whom this Pittsburg forge-master is a typical representative have placed and kept upon the statute-books all sorts of prohibitions and taxes (of which the customs tariff is among the least harmful) designed to limit and effective in limiting the number of bidders for the labor of those who have labor to sell. If there were no tariffs on imported goods; if titles to unoccupied land were not recognized by the State; above all, if the right to issue money were not vested in a monopoly, — bidders for the labor of Carnegie's employees would become so numerous that the offer would soon equal the laborer's product. Now, to solemnly tell these men who are thus prevented by law from getting the wages which their labor would command in a free market that they have a right to reject any price that may be offered for their labor is undoubtedly to speak a formal truth, but it is also to utter a rotten commonplace and a cruel impertinence. Rather tell the capitalists that the laborer is entitled to a free market, and that they, in denying it to him, are guilty of criminal invasion. This would be not only a formal truth, but an opportune application of a vital principle.

Perhaps it will be claimed in answer to this that the laborers, being voters, are responsible for any legal monopolies that exist, and are thereby debarred from pleading them as an excuse for violating the liberty of their employers. This is only true to the extent to which we may consider these laborers as the "fools" persuaded by the capitalists who are the "scoundrels" that "violence (in the form of enforced monopoly) is a friend of the workmen"; which does not make it less unbecoming in the scoundrels to rebuke and punish the fools for any disastrous consequences that may arise out of this appalling combination of scoundrelism and folly.

Conspicuous among the scoundrels who have upheld these monopolies is the editor of the New York "Sun." If he tells truth to-day, he tells it as the devil quotes scripture, — to suit his purpose. He will never consent to an application of equal liberty in the interest of labor, for he belongs to the brotherhood of thieves who prey upon labor. If he only would, we Anarchists would meet him with cheerful acquiescence in its fullest application in the interest of capital. Let Carnegie, Dana & Co. first see to it that every law in violation of equal liberty is removed from the statute-books. If, after that, any laborers shall interfere with the rights of their employers, or shall use force upon inoffensive "scabs," or shall attack their employers' watchmen, whether these be Pinkerton detectives, sheriff's deputies, or the State militia, I pledge myself that, as an Anarchist and in consequence of my Anarchistic faith, I will be among the first to volunteer as a member of a force to repress these disturbers of order and, if necessary, sweep them from the earth. But while these invasive laws remain, I must view every forcible conflict that arises as the consequence of an original violation of liberty on the part of the employing classes, and, if any sweeping is done, may the laborers hold the broom! Still, while my sympathies thus go with the under dog, I shall never cease to proclaim my conviction that the annihilation of neither party can secure justice, and that the only effective sweeping will be that which clears from the statute-book every restriction of the freedom of the market.

T.

Political Duty: A Confession of Skepticism.

[Continued from No. 229.]

Having now found a sense in which the word "State" may be used without confusion and untruth, what have we? Simply a corporation like any other, having, of course, no objective reality, — not being real in the sense in which a tree or a man is said to be real, but existing in men's imaginations as an entity because it is convenient to group under one name many things or persons which are similar, or which act together, — in short, as real as the New York Central Railroad Company or the Republican Party, no more so and no less; composed of a limited number of people who recognize the combination as including them for certain purposes specified by agreement. Having thus defined the State, however, we are, apparently, as far as ever from assigning any source for the sweeping authority which its officers exercise; and in truth, unless the State can be shown to be something greater and higher than any portion, however large, of the inhabitants of its territory (which is highly improbable), it seems better wholly to eliminate the word from this discussion. For, if it be retained, they who defend its broad authority have still before them the task of accounting for it, as it is clearly impossible that an entity which exists only by courtesy of the imagination should be recognized, after its real nature has become known, as an original source of authority. With a view, therefore, to the pruning of useless matter from this article, I leave this convenient intermediary word to that quasi-metaphorical use for which alone it is fit, and proceed to seek directly for reasons why some men should be indulged in the habit of ruling over the rest. Here is one of them:

"Public officers should be obeyed in their lawful commands because their authority rests on the consent of the governed."

The consent of the governed! To whom does that refer? Obviously neither the United States nor any State, city, or town government has at any time the consent of *all* the governed within its borders to the things done under cover of its authority, — not always, even, to its general scheme. The kind of consent, then, which forms the actual basis of our government is the consent of *some* of its governed. With what fairness can a government thus based demand the obedience of those who do not consent?

Then, too, consider the multitude of people who are opposed to various details of government. Think of the numbers of people who hate all sumptuary laws, of those who believe in free trade, of those who think themselves unjustly taxed, — is not their name Legion? Remember the host of young people who come, every year, in this country, to the age when they are expected to stand as men and women among their fellows; suppose it were the custom (and a very good custom it would be) to ask each, at such a time, after setting out the facts fully and fairly, if he or she were willing to abide by the existing scheme of government, to pay such taxes and endure such restrictions as should be fixed upon by the conventionally-chosen officials. Would all consent? Would there not inevitably be some dissenting voices? And would not many who did consent be sorry for it, at times, afterwards?

Again, consider the Indian tribes, called, by a courtesy bitterly ironical, "the wards of the Nation," but more accurately described as the prey of the Politicians. See them, driven from lands which are theirs both by occupation and by treaty, ostensibly for their own good, but really for the gain of the land-boomer, that rascally product of the institution of Property in Land, — harried, cheated, starved, and, if they resist, murdered sometimes by United States troops! Is it not stretching, nay, *rending* the truth to say that these classes are governed, in these particulars, with their consent? Is not this, too, a humbug, this theory of the consent of the governed, as applied to government in the United States? It seems so to me, — and I suggest, in the interest of sound knowledge, that in the text-books of the future a foot note be added to the old Declaration, to read somewhat like this: "Inasmuch as it is highly improbable that any government covering any considerable territory has ever had, for a single day, the consent of all the governed within its borders, it is evident that some reason other than consent must be given, if the hypothesis of *just* governmental powers is to be maintained."

However anxious some few people may have been, in the last century, to set up a government that should in truth rest upon the consent of the governed, the idea must needs have been abandoned at the first making of rules for habitual control, based as they were, by a necessity of mental limitation, on the customs of Europe. For a government really resting on the consent of the governed, which means "the people governing themselves," if I may borrow a phrase which Mr. Bellamy has so mistakenly applied to the theory of the existing government, would be so unlike anything we call government to-day that it would be generally considered, by people like those now living in civilized countries, as no government at all. Obviously, the amount and degree of consent to official acts that actually exists among us is, when considered as a basis for a strict obligation of obedience binding upon all, wholly insufficient.

But let us look at another reason:

"The men who are, for the time, in power, rule with the consent of the majority, and that is enough. The majority have a clear right to control the minority."

Now we approach the heart of the question. Control of the people in the name of the majority is the prevailing method of government in America, from Senate Chamber to Town Hall. Majority-rule, consent or no consent, is the theory of the American politician and his supporters, and, of all political theories, this is the one most thoroughly believed in and most widely exemplified among us.*

Let us examine it.

The theory of majority-right, stated baldly and applied illustratively to individuals, for the sake of greater clearness, is this:

Brown and Jones, because they are two and their neighbor Robinson is only one, have a sacred right to enforce upon him such regulations as they may decide to be for the good of all three, and Robinson is in duty bound to obey said regulations with the rest. If, however, the unsatisfied Robinson can contrive to win either of his neighbors to his way of thinking, though the obligation to obey will be as sacred as ever, the object of obedience may be very materially changed, in accordance with the Robinsonian opinions or prejudices. No matter how tyrannical, how whimsical, how progressive, or how retrogressive a law may be, the only essential point, so far as the duty of obedience is concerned, is that its supporters shall be more numerous than those opposed to it, — that is the theory of majority-right. Of course it goes without saying that we do not have majority-rule, or even a close approximation to it, in this country. What we do have is the rule of *the majority of the representatives of the majority of the adult males*, varied by one-man-power and ring manipulation, — which is not the same thing. But suppose we did have majority-rule; would a man who dissented from the judgment of the majority and disobeyed it necessarily deserve condemnation? Does any deep moral significance attach to numbers? Is there any law written in man's perceptions, or in the natural order of things, that sanctions so crude a method? Can he who makes the approval of the multitude his criterion of wisdom truthfully claim any higher sanction for his decision than if he had selected a few counsellors and adopted theirs? Can it be possible that a halo of anything more sacred than mere prudence crowns a custom under which, as Carlyle says, "the vote of Judas Iscariot is as good as that of Jesus Christ"? Do thoughtful people, in non-political affairs, stigmatize a man for preferring individuality to the following of prevailing customs?

No, the thing is absurd, on the face of it and in the depths of it, and only goes to show what a wonderful variety of foolishness is proclaimed from time to time as sacred and binding upon all. When it can be soberly stated and successfully shown that the odd man who is lugged in to break a tie vote is sure to be on the right side, and therefore ought to have the privilege of binding or loosing the consciences of the rest on the question at issue, it will be time to adopt majority-right as an article of faith, — not before.

T. P. PERKINS.

[To be concluded.]

* "If the majority have no right to rule, their our faith is vain, — we are yet in our sins." — *Thomas B. Reed.*

When the Homestead laborers offered to welcome the State militia with brass bands after welcoming the Pinkerton detectives with leaden balls, they were unmercifully snubbed by the commanding general. It served them right. Until the laborer learns that his worst enemy is the State, there will be no hope for him. Of course it would have been folly to have offered resistance to the military. But, instead of hobnobbing with the soldiers and humiliating themselves before the officers, the workers might at least have lined the streets and greeted their enemies with a repetition of the hoots and jeers which they had given the Pinkerton men but a few days before. They thought, however, that Papa State had come to protect them, and, now that Papa has taken them over his knee and given them a trouncing, their filial affection is doubtless stronger than ever. Labor in its struggle with capital is paralyzed by the political superstition.

The New York "Sun" continually calls the New York "World" an Anarchistic newspaper. The "Sun" is wrong. So far as the "World" favors free trade, it is, to be sure, Anarchistic; but in most respects and especially in its attitude regarding Homestead, its tendencies are toward State Socialism. The "Sun" itself is more nearly an Anarchistic paper than any other daily in New York; I mean by this that it theoretically enunciates much Anarchistic doctrine. But practically its Anarchism is one-sided, and one-sided Anarchism is really Archism of a very objectionable sort. Liberty for thieves and slavery for honest men, — such is the "Sun's" Anarchism. No paper can properly be called Anarchistic whose editor belongs to the brotherhood of thieves.

Merlino has changed his mind. He began by defining the Anarchists out of the Socialist ranks. Now he declares that we are Socialists; "amateur Socialists" he calls us in his paper. This is an unexpected compliment. What is an amateur? One who follows a special thing from love or attachment. An amateur Socialist is a Socialist from attachment, — a Socialist for love of Socialism. Yes, it is true, then; the Anarchists are amateur Socialists. And what are you, Merlino, you and your Communistic friends? *Professional* Socialists?

Timely problems in ballistics: 1. Is there any difference between the penetrating power of a bullet fired from a Winchester rifle in the hands of a Pinkerton detective and that of a bullet fired from a similar rifle in the hands of a Pennsylvania militiaman? 2. Should any man decide the foregoing problem in the affirmative, would either of the aforesaid bullets have power enough to penetrate his skull?

Guest-Duty.

[Translated from the German by Harry Lyman Koopman.]

Thou in this world art but a guest,
A sojourner whose days are few;
Is it so hard for thee to bear and do
So that no other guest thou burdenest?

Johannes Trojan.

Per Castra ad Astra.

[To the lovers of good poetry I must heartily commend the "Flaming Meteor," the recently published collection of the poems of Will Hubbard Kernan, better known, perhaps, in the world of letters by his pen-name of "Kenneth Lamar." From among these poetic brilliants I have selected one which I am confident Liberty's readers will greatly admire. — E. C. W.]

"Per castra ad astra" — through camps to the stars —
Ran the demagogue legend of old;
It glowed on the banners borne forth to the wars
By the soldiers believing and bold.

When torn by the spears of the truculent foe,
And trampled by hoof and by heel,
They were taught that their glorified spirits would go
Straightway to the Land of the Leal.

Poor dupes of proud devils! They thought if they gave
Of their blood to the glory of kings,
They would sweep forth, transfigured, from out of the grave
With a flash of white, fluttering wings!

"Per castra ad astra" — the lie has come down
Through cycles and conquests unknown;
And still it stirs men to march forth for the crown,
And with bayonets prop up the throne;

And still it stirs many to barter the bloom
And the song and the sunlight of time
For the hope of a blessing beyond the bleak tomb
In a vague and invisible clime;

To stifle the lyric that leaps from the heart,
And to turn from the waltzers away,
Though thrilling and tingling to share in a part
Of the merriment gladsome and gay;

To shrink from a present and palpable bliss
And many a blessing benign;
To flee from the sweet, cunning lips that would kiss,
And the ripe, rosy sparkle of wine.

Yes, they hiss down the flesh and its every delight,
And they dream the denial will buy
A lily-hung harp and a diadem bright
In a possible sphere in the sky.

O! pity the Puritan friar and nun,
Who crucify sense for the soul;
Who tread upon thistles while under the sun,
And quaff of the bitterest bowl.

O! pity the martyrs, wherever they are,
Who sacrifice happiness here;
Who boast of the pleasures they mangle and mar
In their wrath on the altars they rear;

For the grave-worms are cruel, the grave-clods are chill,
And a dream is uncertain at best;
Then laugh and make merry, my lads, with a will,
While the passions pulse high in the breast;

Nor trade off the glorious things that you hold
In the grip of your palms, for a prize
That may vanish forever away, when the mold
Sets its seal on your beautiful eyes.

Be good to yourselves, and be good unto all
Who travel your way to the tomb,
And reach out wherever your footprints may fall
For all of the roses that bloom.

Seek the glad, whitest glory of starlight and sun,
And when it is lost in the night,
Let your hearts bubble over with frolic and fun
Where the festival fires burn bright.

Kiss the lips that may offer, and kiss them once more,
And join in the shout and the song,
And drink of the dew that the wine-presses pour,
And jest as you journey along.

"Per castra ad astra" may do for the clown,
But never for you or for me,
Till a dead man or woman from heaven wings down
And points up a path we can see!

The Everlasting Yea.

Ye find in Freedom but an endless No, —
Because ye grope in mould and murk below;
Lift up your heads: the glorious light of day
Reveals it as the Everlasting Yea.

Harry Lyman Koopman.

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